

(Washington, DC) Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) issued the following statement in response to the ruling yesterday by U.S. District Judge Virginia A. Phillips regarding 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' In *Log Cabin Republicans v. the United States of America*, the California judge declared that the 1993 law banning open service by gay and lesbian Americans is unconstitutional, violating the First and Fifth Amendments.

"Judge Phillips' historic ruling is yet further affirmation that 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' is both legally and militarily indefensible. As Judge Phillips concluded, 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' threatens our national security and impedes military readiness and unit cohesion. The majority of Americans agree that 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' has no relevance in 2010.

"In May, the House of Representatives passed bipartisan legislation to repeal 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' I strongly urge the Senate to pass the National Defense Authorization Act when it reconvenes in September, which will allow the Pentagon to move forward with implementing 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' repeal and replacing it with a policy of inclusion and non-discrimination.

"I applaud Judge Phillips and the Log Cabin Republicans for standing up for what is right for our country and military. As Judge Phillips awaits the submission of a proposed injunction by the Log Cabin Republicans to nullify 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,' we must also continue to push for legislative repeal of this discriminatory policy. The fact of the matter is, as long as 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' remains law, our brave servicemen and women are put at unnecessary risk. I remain committed to working together with President Obama, Secretary Gates, and my colleagues in Congress in repealing 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' once and for all."

Congressman Hastings has been a leader in the fight to repeal 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,' having introduced an amendment to ban the use of defense appropriations funds to investigate and discharge service members for telling their sexual orientation and legislation that would protect active-duty service members, regardless of their sexual orientation, who openly testify in Congressional hearings by expanding current whistleblower protections between members of the Armed Forces and Members of Congress.

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings is Vice Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a senior member of the House Rules Committee, and Co-Chairman of the U.S.

Helsinki Commission.

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